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ABSTRACT

The field methods for data collection in a research project on linguistic change and variation in the Philadelphia speech community, their origins and use, are described. Five working principles of the project are detailed: (1) there are no single style speakers; (2) styles can be ranged along a single dimension, according to the attention paid to speech; (3) the vernacular, in which minimum attention is paid to speech, provides the most systematic data; (4) any systematic observation of a speaker defines a formal context where more than minimal attention is paid to speech; and (5) face-to-face interviews are the only means of obtaining the needed volume and quality of recorded speech. The field methods outlined include neighborhood studies (aims, design, selection, entry, the interview and its components, and field experiments), the telephone survey (the sampling problem, the Philadelphia sample, survey design, and evaluation), group sessions, rapid and anonymous surveys, a comparison of methods for acquiring sociolinguistic data, and policy for protection of data and subjects' rights (candid recording, protection of anonymity, and access to tape recordings). (MSE)

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FIELD METHODS OF THE PROJECT ON LINGUISTIC CHANGE AND VARIATION

by

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0.1. Earlier sources for current field techniques. The field methods described here are based on developments in socio-linguistic research which began in the early 1960's. Field methods used in Martha's Vineyard (Labov 1963) were modifications of earlier techniques used in dialectology, and the New York City study (Labov 1966) still showed some focus on lexical items which reflected the dialectological tradition. The New York City study developed techniques for reducing formality in face-to-face interviews and obtaining data on a wide range of styles; it included a number of field experiments such as minimal pair tests, subjective reaction tests, family background tests, self-report tests and tests of linguistic insecurity, as well as the method of rapid and anonymous surveys. These methods were adopted to a greater or lesser extent in a number of sociolinguistic surveys based on individual interviews: of Detroit (Shuy, Wolfram & Riley 1968); Panama City (Cedergren 1973); Norwich (Trudgill 1972); Salt Lake City (Cook 1969); Phaltan (Berntsen 1973); Philadelphia (Cofer 1972); Bahia Blanca, Argentina (Weinberg 1974); Glasgow (Macaulay & Trevelyan 1973), as well as a number of smaller studies. Descriptions of these methods are available in Labov 1966 (Ch. 1-6); Shuy, Wolfram & Riley 1968; and Wolfram & Fasold 1974.

A second tradition of field methods stems from the work of Gumperz in Hennes (1964) which utilized participant-observation techniques to obtain recorded samples of group interaction. Such recordings of group sessions were integrated into the studies of South Harlem (Labov, Cohen, Robins & Lewis 1968), along with various advances in face-to-face interviewing techniques and field experiments.

Methods for combining participant-observation and individual interviewing have been developed in the various components of the study of the Philadelphia speech community by LVC[1], particularly in King of Prussia by A. Payne, in the Irish and Italian communities by A. Bower, and in the Puerto Rican community by S. Poplack. The modules used as conversa-

tional resources in the interviews are the result of intensive development of early methods by members of the class on The Study of the Speech Community (Linguistics 560) from 1972 to 1976. The current work of Baugh in Pacoima, California represents the further development of systematic recording through participant-observations, while the current study of Paris by Lennig has carried forward the methods of sampling the community through individual interviews.

1. Aims and working principles

The methods used by LCV are governed by two basic aims which are sometimes seen in opposition. On the one hand, we need a large volume of recorded speech of high enough quality for instrumental analysis of vowels or the precise judgments on the realizations of grammatical particles which are often reduced to rapidly articulated, minimal features of sound. On the other hand, we place a very high value on records of vernacular speech (see below) which show a minimum shift or accommodation of the presence of an outside observer. The tension between these two needs informs the basic dynamics of our developing field methods over the past fifteen years. The following 'methodological axioms' derived from Labov 1972 (pp. 208-209) are actually working principals, based on empirical findings in the sources cited above.

1. There are no single style speakers. By "style shifting" we mean to include any consistent change in linguistic forms used by a speaker, qualitative or quantitative, that can be associated with a change in topics, participants, channel or the broader social context. Some speakers have a much wider range of style shifting than others, and some communities do not show any significant shift on features that are important style indicators in other communities. The most recent sound changes are relatively insensitive to stylistic contexts, but most linguistic changes thare are well advanced show a wide range of style shifting.

2. Styles can be ranged along a single dimension, measured by the amount of attention paid to speech. This propos. is supported by

observations of the factors that lead to style shifting in various interview situations and naturalistic settings, as well as experimental evidence (Mahl 1972, Labov 1972:p. 98). Attention paid to speech appears to be mediated by the process of audio-monitoring which can be blocked by a wide range of factors. This statement is not equivalent to a naturalistic analysis of style, which might require a very large number of dimensions, but merely states that styles can be so ordered.

3. The vernacular, in which the minimum attention is paid to speech, provides the most systematic data for linguistic analysis. The "vernacular" is defined as that mode of speech that is acquired in pre-adolescent years. Its highly regular character is an empirical observation. The vernacular included inherent variation, but the rules governing that variation appear to be more regular than those operating in more formal super-posed" styles that are acquired later in life. Each speaker has a vernacular form, in at least one language; this may be the prestige dialect (as in the case of "RP"), or a non-standard variety. In some cases, systematic data can be obtained from more formal speech styles, but we do not know this until they have been calibrated against the vernacular.

4. Any systematic observation of a speaker defines a formal context where more than the minimum attention is paid to speech. We therefore do not expect to find the vernacular used in the main body of a first face-to-face interview, no matter how casual or friendly the speaker may appear to be. We must assume that there will be distinct changes in a number of linguistic variables when no outside observer is present.

5. Face-to-face interviews are the only means of obtaining the volume and quality of recorded speech that is needed for quantitative analysis. In other words, quantitative analysis demands data obtained through the most obvious kind of systematic observation.

LCV is then faced with the "Observer's Paradox": our aim is to observe how people talk when they are not being observed. The problem is well known in other fields under the name of the "experimenter effect," and the problem of minimizing the experimenter effect is one that has received a great deal of attention. We refer to it as a paradox since

it can never be solved completely in principle: the remainder of this discussion is devoted to the various means by which we can approximate a solution.

The original sources for the two models for field methods outlined above are both extreme in the ways that they fail as solutions to the observer's paradox. Survey methodology is a highly developed technique for obtaining a representative sample of opinions and attitudes from an enumerated population, but the interactive technique used in such surveys is designed to keep rapport at a moderate level and filter out all information that cannot be coded in the scheme developed. Here the experimenter effect is maximal, and the correspondence of the attitudes expressed to those that operate in every-day life is not easily determined. On the other hand, the opposing approach used by social anthropologists and ethnographers fails as a solution in the opposite way. The participant-observer may gather data on interactive behavior with a minimum of observer effect, but very little linguistic data can be recorded accurately in journals several hours after the event. Many participant-observers feel quite limited in the extent that they can introduce recording apparatus; when they do record group interaction with a minimum of other observational effects, the data is limited in both quality and quantity.

Our basic goal is to modify both methods as far as we can to reduce these limitations, and then combine both approaches to converge on the linguistic system we hope to describe. There will be sources of error in participant-observation and in face-to-face interviews, but they are complementary; by combining both methods, we can estimate the degree and direction of error in our final statement of the rules of the vernacular.

2. Neighborhood studies

2.1. Aims and basic design. The original sociolinguistic surveys followed the usual pattern of survey methodology by enumerating a a population, selecting individuals or households randomly from that population, and then interviewing each of those by a standard instrument.

When households are selected as the basic unit, one individual may be randomly selected from that household. Stratified random samples modify this method by selecting only those individuals whose sex, age, class and ethnicity fill pre-specified cells to obtain representatives of all types. In all of these approaches, the view of the community which is obtained is constructed from the speech produced by those individuals in the interview situation, together with their substantive responses to questions on relations with and attitudes towards others. These data may be supplemented by occasional observations of interaction on the interview site. Such surveys have given us the most accurate and representative view of the social stratification of language, and a partial view of the range of style shifting characteristic of the community. They do not give a view of the linguistic interactions that produce such stratification, which must be reconstructed indirectly, and they do not give as close a view of the vernacular as studies of group interaction do.

The studies of adolescent groups in South Harlem from 1966 to 1968 yielded the most accurate view of the vernacular in group sessions together with extended interviews of individuals. The sociometric diagrams constructed of such groups were extremely valuable in explaining the distribution of linguistic forms (Labov 1972, Ch. 7). This approach was not extended to the adult community, however.

Six neighborhood studies conducted by LCV from 1972 to 1976 are designed to obtain a large amount of linguistic and social data on the major social networks of the neighborhoods. They include long-range participant-observation which permits unlimited access to the linguistic competence of the central figures of those networks, along with recordings of group interaction in which the vernacular is displayed with minimum interference from the effects of observation.

At the same time, the neighborhood studies utilize systematic sociolinguistic interviews to obtain comparable data on all members of the social network.

2.2 Selection of a neighborhood. The neighborhoods selected for study form a judgment sample of the city in the largest sense: the

priorities of selection are ordered in accordance with major residential, class and ethnic groups most characteristic of the city. There are not enough neighborhoods involved to form a sample representative of the city as a whole, however, and without supplementary data, these neighborhood studies cannot be considered to yield a representative view of the Philadelphia speech community. Their primary function is to achieve depth, rather than breadth.

Information on census tracts and previous studies of ethnic distributions in Philadelphia are consulted to identify blocks that are located centrally in the main ethnic and class groups. Data from our own random and anonymous surveys are also utilized for this purpose. Within each of these areas, a single block is selected as an initial research site. Three characteristics motivate our selection of a block.

a. Residentially stable with close to full occupation of dwelling units, and many adult residents who have lived in the area since childhood.

b. Relatively soft interfaces between public and private space, with a resultant high level of interaction of residents.

c. A moderate number of shopping and recreation sites in the immediate vicinity, with a consequent high level of local interaction.

2.3. Entry into the neighborhood. The first entry into neighborhood social networks utilizes two basic strategies. One is contact with individuals and small groups who make themselves available for social interaction on the block. Studies of the use of public and private space, along with particular sketches and surveys of the block in question, provide an over-all view of the times and places at which people make themselves so available. The second approach is through persons who are centrally located in social institutions with an overview of the neighborhood: local stores, groceries, barber shops, post offices, fraternal organizations, churches and schools. In middle-class neighborhoods with widely detached houses, the second strategy has proven most effective, particularly with the use of higher status institutions

such as churches and schools. In working class neighborhoods, first contacts have been most frequently made through informal channels.

The initial presentation of LCV field workers is consistent in general principles, though it may vary in detail with the personality, age, and sex of the field worker. We present an accurate view of our aims and interests in the broadest sense, including the study of language features characteristic of the neighborhood without singling language out for specific attention. Our overall aim is getting to know the neighborhood: how people get along; how it has changed or maintained itself; whether living on the block brings people together or pulls them further apart, and how this neighborhood may be different from others. In talking about the motivation and results of our study, we emphasize the problems that are the joint concern of our work and the people in the neighborhood: the changes that are taking place in American cities, how living in the cities affects people and their ways of life. As our contacts with people grow, it appears that we have a particular interest in language and local dialect, and our continued interest in recording is motivated by this concern. But our interest in language is placed within a larger framework of interest in narrative accounts of daily life, in confrontations and accommodations, in relations of ethnic groups and educational problems. Since the papers and publications of members of LCV reflect this wider range of interest, we have no difficulty in justifying a long-term involvement with the social life of the neighborhood along with formal inquiry and field experiments specifically concerned with language.

2.4. The sociolinguistic interview. The first recorded conversation with a member of the speech community usually follows a well developed strategy which may be entitled "the sociolinguistic interview." In conception and design, current methods are descended from the interviews developed in sociolinguistic surveys (Labov 1966:Ch. 5, Appendix A; Shuy, Wolfram & Riley 1968; Labov, Cohen & Robins 1965). However, the developments of the past ten years have carried this technique considerably beyond that starting point, eliminating many of the elements that still showed the inheritance from traditional dialectology.

Our present methods are informed considerably by studies of conversation outside of the interview.

The sociolinguistic interview is governed by a number of goals, some complementary but others contradictory:

(1) to record with reasonable fidelity from 1 to 2 hours of speech from each speaker.

(2) to obtain the full range of demographic data necessary for the analysis of sociolinguistic patterns (age; residential, school, occupational, and language history; family location and relations; income, rent or house values; group memberships and associations).

(3) to obtain comparable responses to questions that define contrasting attitudes and experiences among various sub-cultures (experience of the danger of death; fate; premonitions; fighting and rules for a fair fight; attitudes towards other racial and ethnic groups; educational aspirations).

(4) to elicit narratives of personal experience, where community norms and styles of personal interaction are most plainly revealed, and where style is regularly shifted towards the vernacular.

(5) to stimulate group interaction among the people present, and so record conversation not addressed to the interviever.

(6) to isolate from a range of topics those of greatest interest to the speaker, and allow him or her to lead in defining the topic of conversation.

(7) to trace the patterns of communication among members of the neighborhood, and establish the position of the speaker in the communication network.

(8) to obtain a record of overt attitudes towards language, linguistic features and linguistic stereotypes.

(9) to obtain specific information on linguistic structures through formal elicitation: reading texts and word lists.

(10) to carry out field experiments on subjective reactions towards perceptions of linguistic forms (minimal pair and commutation tests; self-report tests; subjective reaction tests; family background tests).

The technique of the sociolinguistic interview must be responsive to this variety of goals. Goals (2-3) and (7-10) are best carried out

within a reasonably formal framework, where interviewers are guided by protocols that give comparable results. If the language style involves shifts towards more careful speech, that may be a necessary price to be paid for comparability. On the other hand, the predominant concern of the interviewer is in shifting the style towards the vernacular; goals (4-6) implement this shift. If the drive towards personal narrative, interest and tangential shifting becomes over-dominant, we wind up with large bodies of speech, close to vernacular style, of great intrinsic interest, but very difficult to use in obtaining measures of language structure and use across the community.

It is important to note that the steps needed to record a high quality signal (goal 1) may increase the observer effect. the use of a lavaliere dynamic microphone such as the Sennheiser MD-214 reduces the obtrusiveness of a table microphone, and insures optimal signal-to-noise ratio. But careful pre-testing of recording, and monitoring of a VU-meter, are essential to avoid distortion and insure consistent results, and any steps taken to reduce this monitoring have proven counter-productive. Further details on recording techniques are given in section 2.5.

The technical development of the sociolinguistic interview is aimed at maximizing over-all progress in achieving goals (1-10). This development involves two technical devices: (a) the module and (b) the conversational network.

2.4.1. The module. The conversational module is a group of questions focusing on a particular topic: i.e., children's games, premonitions, the danger of death, aspirations, etc. The generalized set of such modules, Q-GEN-II, represents a conversational resource on which the interviewer draws in construction an interview schedule.

Many questions within a praticular module have been shaped over a number of years by three processes:

a. Responses to generalized foci of interest. Attention to goal (6) has led to the recognition that several general foci of interest apply accross many speech communities: death and the danger of death; sex; and moral indignation. The ways in which these concerns appear

in an interview format may be particular to each community, particularly in the case of sex. But other questions can be shaped generally for many communities: e.g., "Did you ever have a dream that really scared you?" "Were you ever in a situation where you were in serious danger of getting killed?"

b. Colloquial format. Many inexperienced interviewers, formulating questions without preparation, will exhibit a bookish lexicon and grammar, or show the influence of survey methodology. The questions formulated in our modules provide a guide to colloquial style, which may then be further modified to fit the particular style of the interviewer and the current lexicon of the speech community.

c. Shortening. Questions formulated without preparation tend to be quite long, with many re-starts. One governing principle is that module questions should take less than 5 seconds to deliver and in many cases, less than 1 second.

d. Feedback. Questions may first be formulated from an outsider's point of view, as in "Do you play the numbers around here?" But information from many speakers is accumulated to transform the question into one that presupposes a generalized state of affairs, and looks to the particular issues of interest.

All three of these formatting processes have operated effectively to produce the central question from our Module 9, on Family.

Did you ever get blamed for something you didn't do?

The normal practice is for an interviewer to become intimately acquainted with a module format, and to adapt questions to his own colloquial style. However, some questions are marked with a double asterisk ** to indicate that they should be asked in exactly the words indicated, first to achieve comparability, and second because experience has shown that the wording is close to optimal.

Modules show a certain degree of hierarchical structure. A section usually begins with a general question, and then proceeds to more detailed issues, which may be penetrated to the extent the interviewer's and speaker's interests allow. Others contain check lists, as in Module 2,

Children's games, which are to be run through rapidly to test the subject's recognition of certain items.

2.4.2. The network. The modules are combined into a conversational network by the interviewer. Modules are selected by the interviewer from the general resource file Q-GEN-II to construct a conversational network, in which modules are connected at transitional points through close associations. Most modules begin and end with transitional questions which permit links to many other networks. Thus Module 3, Fights, begins with the question:

0. What did (do) fights start about around here?

with choice of past or present form dictated by the age of the speaker. This may be linked with Module 2, Games, where arguments start over tough tackles, or with Module 11, Peer groups, in the discussion of friends getting mad at each other. Module 3 ends with

5. Do girls fight around here?
   1. Did you ever get into a fight with a girl?

and can lead into Module 4.1, Dating patterns, going steady, etc. which can begin with the question "What are the girls really like around here?" Such transitions can be initiated by the interviewer or may occur naturally in the course of the conversation. Generalized networks for particular communities are sometimes created, showing various points of entry into the network depending on the age, sex and social class of the subjects.

Figure 1 shows a typical network of topics used with working class adults in Philadelphia. The interview is entered via Module 1, Demography, and then proceeds either to Module 16, Work, or to Module 2.2., Boys' games. From that point, one can proceed to Module 11, Peer group, or to Module 15 and then to the sub-network formed by fights (3), Crime in the streets (14), Danger of death (6), Fear (7), Dreams (8), and Religion (10). Another sub-network is formed by Family (9), Dating (4), and Marriage (5).

The Language module (20) is indicated separately, since this is introduced in a variety of ways as a distinct area of interest, sometimes in a continued interview (see below).

A selected set of modules is appended to this section to illustrate their general form.

2.4.3. The use of modules and networks. The modules, assembled into networks, form a set of conversational resources to assist in accomplishing the goals (1-10). The network is a guide for the interviewer as he or she constructs a simulated conversation which follows principles quite similar to the unfocused conversations of every-day life. The interviewer does initiate topics, often with questions: this is an expected role. But there is no rigid insistence upon a pre-set order of topics, and ideally the interviewer plays a part in the conversation which approaches that of any other participant: volunteering experience, responding to new issues, and following the subject's main interests and ideas wherever they go (see 2.4.4 below). Interviewers vary in the degree to which they utilize the structure of the network, but the most successful interviews follow a path which is both natural to the speaker and comparable to other paths. Figure 2 shows the network of interview topics followed in an interview between A. Bower of LCV and Diane S., 21, of Kensington. An hour and a half of conversation began with child raising, then shifted to demographic data, to Diane's job (Mod 16) and then to family (Mod 9). The discussion of dating (Mod 4), then back to family in the form of daughter-mother relationships, which allowed the interviewer to include the central question on blame ('Did you ever get blamed for something you didn't do?'), particularly valuable for stimulating narratives centered on moral indignation. The interviewer then returned to demographic questions and obtained a large amount of data on the family as a whole before shifting rather abruptly to girls' games (Mod 2.3), which led to narratives of fights and the rules for fair fights (Mod 3) and back to family relationships as the question of punishment came up.

The interviewer sensed that Diane had a strong interest in children's games, and returned many times to this theme "... back to the games you

played as a kid"; each time, this theme led in a new direction by a different set of associations. The second discussion of games led to a discussion of friends, their teen-age games, and back to dating, which involved a side discussion of Diane's philosophy of life, and then a natural extension to marriage (Mod 5), ethnic differences (Mod 12), and back to jobs, school (Mod 15), crime in the neighborhood (Mod 14), Diane's job again and her philosophy of life again. The interviewer returned a third time to the theme of Diane's childhood:

> "Getting back to when you were a kid, was there *anyone* you didn't like?"

This led to a general discussion of the block, and a discussion of the meaning of "step" vs. "stoop", and then into language (Mod 20). A fourth return to childhood games, and "Mischief Night" in particular, led to a much wider variety of topics, ending with more family information and a discussion of family relationships on the block.

The associational network of this interview was similar to that of the spontaneous conversations we monitored for topic structure. At the same time, it was guided by the interviewer to gradually build up a complete view of Diane's family relationships and the residential, educational and job history of the other people in her social network, and a great deal of information on social relations in the neighborhood (goal (2)). The interviewer is particularly alert to Diane's display of interest (goal (6)), and recognized that pre-adolescent and adolescent activities formed an "ultra-rich" topic which could be used again and again without exhausting interest. Figure 2 shows by the letter "N" the location of narratives of personal experience (goal (4)). All in all, nine of the ten aims of the interview process were well developed in this interview.

2.4.4. The principle of tangential shifting.[2] Throughout the sociolinguistic interview, there is careful attention to any contribution by the speaker which represents a tangent or shift of topic away from the topic which the interviewer initiated. The sociolinguistic interview

is considered a failure if the speaker does no more than answer questions. It is the additional material that the speaker provides, beyond the initial question, which provides the main substance of the interview. Figure 3 shows a more detailed view of the succession of topics within the interview. The square brackets enclose topics initiated by the interviewer, and the circles the responses of the speaker on a given topic. Arrows that lead to new topics without intervention of (square brackets) show initiation of new topics by the speaker. In some cases, a dashed circle follows a formal question; this indicates a short interchange of questions between interviewer and subject, which led the speaker herself to initiate a new topic. Dashed lines between topics indicate indirect guidance of the interviewer, encouraging the speaker to shift tangentially to a new topic.

If we examine all of the topical transitions in Figure 3, we obtain the following proportions:

Topics initiated by a question of the interviewer	38
Topics initiated by the speaker	42
Tangential shifts encouraged by the interviewer	9
Question-and-answer series terminated by a new topic introduced by speaker	9

We can see in this interview a balance between the impetus provided by the interviewer and that provided by the subject. Figure 3 also shows that the second half of the interview clearly marked a shift towards speaker-initiation, as we would expect.

2.4.5. Power relationships in the interview setting. One of the crucial elements that determines the course of a sociolinguistic interview and further contacts is the relative degree of authority of the interviewer and speaker. The "Observer's Paradox" is not to be seen as absolute, but closely linked to the perceived relationship of an outside observer in a dominating class (Encrevé 1976). The interviewer is engaged in an occupation that clearly points to membership in a middle-class institution of some kind--research or journalism. Any identification of the

the interviewer as a teacher would stress the fact that he is a person that information flows from, not to.[3] The basic counter-strategy of the sociolinguistic interview is to emphasize the position of the interviewer as a learner, in a position of lower authority than the person he is talking to.

This favorable interactive position can only be achieved by a thorough-going rejection of the authority that stems from association with the dominating social class. Sociolinguistic interviewers must continually monitor their behavior for any signs of this authority. They must review their lexical and grammatical choices to remove any evidence of bookishness or influence of literary language, and ruthlessly plane away all remains of conspicuous ostentation to achieve a plain, unvarnished style. On the positive side, the sociolinguistic interviewer will develop his own use of colloquial idiom, even at the expense of generalized intelligibility. The extent and style of morphological condensation will show similar adjustments, in the direction of the local dialect. It is not uncommon for interviewers to make partial phonetic shifts towards a local dialect; as long as this is not so extreme as to be seen as an imitation of that dialect, it will be accepted as a symbolic entry into the local value system.

On the interactive level, the interviewer will work to develop a position of lower authority and lesser consequence in the conversation. One part of this behavior is a consequence of the principles already developed. In monitoring the rise and fall of interest shown by the speaker, he naturally attends closely to everything being said, and gives the other more than the time needed to finish one idea and launch into a new one. His interest must not be a mechanical one, and he must not be distracted from the content of what is being said by too much attention to the speaker's phonology or syntax. The interviewer must have a keen appreciation of the strengths and expertise of the speaker: a genuine and profound interest in what the speaker knows. If he pays attention, he is bound to learn, and absorb knowledge that will be fed back into future interviews, and raise his discussions with others to a higher level of interest and expertise.

Experienced interviewers work towards steadily removing themselves

from a position of consequence in the conversation being conducted. When a third or fourth person appears, their attention will then not be drawn to the interviewer and what he is doing, but rather to the subject of the conversation, and it is quite possible for a face-to-face conversation between the interviewer and speaker to gradually shift to a general conversation where the interviewer plays a very small part.

In one respect, the interviewer should retain his authority: in his own area of expertise in making recordings. He should feel free to suggest where the others might sit so that he can get the best sound; if outdoors, to move out of the wind or away from the street; if indoors, to turn off the sound on the television set, turn off electric fans, or move away from a noisy motor. Once subjects have agreed to make a recording, they have the same investment in obtaining good results as the interviewer, and they will be even more disappointed if the playback is distorted by reverberation or outside noise.

2.4.6. Continued interviews. Given the nature of our neighborhood studies as continuous contact with the speech community, there is no imperative to complete an interview schedule in a single session. In many cases, the goals (1-10) are carried out in several sessions. In fact, the recording of group interaction under goal (5) is best carried out by participant-observation in the months following the initial interview (see the discussion of group sessions in 4. below). But the goals of the individual interview are quite distinct from those of group sessions, and it is therefore necessary and desirable to continue the format of the initial interview in second or third meetings with subjects as individuals or pairs. The familiarization process which is evident throughout the individual interview (Labov 1972:97-98) continues to reduce the level of formal constraints in these continued sessions, but the fundamental dynamics are the same as those sketched above.

In current neighborhood studies of Philadelphia, a second complete series of individual interviews was carried out centered around a group of communication modules. These modules outline the location of the speaker's social networks--both family and friends--in relation to the block. They investigate the kinds of help that neighborhood people give

each other that bring them into social relations--re-directing mail, baby-sitting, relaying maternity clothes, emergencies and sickness. A second area deals with socializing--sports, afternoon and evening gatherings. A third module deals with the telephone, of special interest to us in obtaining data that relates the neighborhood studies to telephone interviews (see section 3 below). A fourth module concerns privacy and the lack of it: gossip, friendship and the breaking off of social relations.

The ultimate extension of such continued interviews is a series of confidential conversations that the field worker recorded with the central informant in each neighborhood: she obtained a sketch of the social position and history of each resident on the block, from the point of view of her informant. After several years of intimacy and familiarization, this catalogue laid bare many of the determinants of social behavior that would have been hidden from view in initial interviews. Because such data is charged with strong social significance, the recordings are separated from the normal archiving procedures and are not available even to members of the research staff without special precautions (see section 7. below).

Continued interviews allow us to resolve part of the contradiction inherent in the interview format: the need to follow the principles of unfocused conversation and tangential shifting conflicts with the need to acquire comparable data. As we review first interviews, we find that questions needed for comparability (such as attitudes towards fate or educational aspirations) were sometimes passed by in the course of following the speaker's natural interests, and for one reason or another, the interviewer never returned through the conversational network to that area. These omissions are then systematically repaired in the second interview.

The construction of effective subjective reaction, self-report and family background tests often requires long familiarity with the speech community, and it regularly happens that these are not completed until many first interviews have been carried out. Such tests will regularly find a place in continued interviews.

2.4.7. The re-construction of modules through feedback. Throughout

our research in the speech community, new information on speakers' activities, interests, and the central concerns of the neighborhood flows back through answers to questions and through new topics initiated by the speakers. In constructing new questions, and improving old ones, we regularly feed back this new information into the module construction. The quality of the conversations that follow shows a steady shift towards more involvement of the speaker, longer discussions, and more narrative.

A first approach to a new neighborhood, sub-culture or geographic area inevitably involves the interviewer in the position of the outsider. The position as an outsider reinforces the initial appeal for help, and most people respond favorably to that appeal. But it will appear that it is very difficult to maintain a conversation of any length or involvement with someone who is a rank beginner: there is simply too much to explain, and no handle on where to start. It is only when the new person shows some understanding of the critical issues, and asks questions that point at real problems of concern to local people, that the conversation takes on life. An outsider cannot easily reach the areas of disputed knowledge that form the focus of extended discussion. Therefore the interviewer is continually reconstructing modules in order to advance more rapidly into the areas of interest.

Module 11.1 shows the beginnings of such development in the discussion of girls' social activities. Question 1 concerns pajama parties, and begins with a pair of very general inquiries:

1. Do you ever have pajama parties?
.1. What do you do?

These have too little focus to produce very much response from most adolescent girls. But the following questions feed back into the interview situation the results of a few productive early sessions:

.1. Do you play the ouija board?
.2. Have you ever had a seance?
.3. Do levitation?

In a variety of speech communities throughout the United States, these questions have opened up an area of excited discussion. But the process of feedback is not complete here, and there are several routes to follow. An experienced interviewer will avoid the issue as to whether levitation or ouija boards "really work," and go on to inquire into cases where they were "really scared." Candles often go out at crucial moments; boards say things that seem to go beyond coincidence, and as soon as disbelief is suspended, stories multiply.

2.5. Field experiments. The study of sociolinguistic stratification in New York City (Labov 1966) introduced a series of field experiments into the interview format which were further developed in the South Harlem study and elsewhere. They may be characterized briefly where descriptions are available in the literature.

2.5.1. Minimal pair tests. The simplest form of controlled inquiry into speech perception is a list of pairs: the speaker is asked to repeat each one, and then say whether they are the same or different (Labov 1966: 596; Labov, Cohen & Robins 1965). Ways in which such tests fail to reflect the vernacular or productive system are outlined in Labov, Yaeger & Steinner (1972:230-235), and in particular, cases where the speaker pronounces the two words differently but says they are the same.

2.5.2. Commutation tests. References to commutation tests may be found in Harris 1951, but we do not know of any systematic report on commutation tests before Labov, Yaeger & Steiner (1972:236-257). A pair of words distinguished by one phonemic opposition appears in a randomized list of five instances of each. In one form of the test, one native speaker reads the list, and another identifies the words. In another, a listener may be asked to identify his own pronunciations recorded from a previous reading. Commutation tests were introduced when it was found that in many dialects there were marginal oppositions that were consistently maintained in speech (though with a small margin of security) but that could not be labelled in minimal pair or commutation tests by native speakers.

In Philadelphia, we have been systematically investigating the near-merger of /er/ and /ɔr/ as in merry vs. Murray, and the full merger of /ohr/ and /uhr/ as in tore vs. tour, using minimal pair and commutation tests.

2.5.3. Embedded contrast tests. The development of a more naturalistic contrast test was motivated by the failure of native speakers to label contrasts in commutation tests that they themselves made in speech. It is possible that a speaker could fail to label a contrast in a formal test but could utilize the phonetic contrast unconsciously to distinguish words in the course of ordinary conversation. To test this possibility, we devised embedded contrast tests which focus on a moral problem without any evidence of attention to the problem of phonological contrast. Earlier reading tests (Labov 1966:598) have embedded phonological contrast in close connection without a focus of attention ("... ask a subway guard. My God! I thought... that's one way to get lost in New York City"). But no semantic interpretation depended on the contrast.

Embedded contrast tests use a narrative that develops a series of well-balanced semantic alternatives that can be resolved in one way or another through a single lexical choice. That choice is then maintained through a following series of sentences that are completely consistent with either choice. When the experimenter obtains the subject's judgment on the moral issues involved, the semantic interpretation that he made is well fixed and easy to determine.

The most highly developed example of an embedded contrast experiment is "The Coach". After it appeared that Philadelphians cannot pass a commutation test with merry vs. Murray, but still maintain a consistent difference in speech, we decided to examine the possibility that listeners could use the distinction in unreflecting semantic interpretation of connected text. It was necessary to avoid any focus on language, so that contrasts such as Murray vs. Merry were to be avoided. The contrast was tested through the unobtrusive pair, "Merion" (a Philadelphia suburb) and "Murray in".

The necessary context was established through a fairly long narrative about a coach of a Little League team under pressure to play girls on

his team. The name Murray was established for a boy who tried very hard but couldn't catch anything. The name "Merion" was established as a nickname for a girl whose rich and overbearing mother came from Lower Merion. The coach gave both Murray and Merion the title of First Utility Outfielder. At a crucial moment in the series, the center fielder was injured, and the coach found himself in a dilemma: which first utility outfielder to play? He considered the alternatives and decided,

"No help for it. I've got to play [mərien] there!"

In various versions of the text, the word in phonetics is the natural pronunciation of a Philadelphia speaker who had intended to say "Merion"; in a second version, the words "Murray in" are intended. The resultant difference [ə] in the first vowel is about 100 Hz. F2. Two other versions use exaggerated differences of 250 Hz. F2.

The full text of "The Coach" is given in Appendix A.[4] After the final question, "Did he do the right thing?" the subject's opinion on the moral issues demonstrates whether he interpreted the phonetic form as "Murray in" or "Merion". The semantics are balanced enough to give about equal numbers of each response for those who do not hear the difference. The experimenter then replays the section where the coach reasons through the problem (marked with brackets in Appendix A) and in this version the opposing phoneme is used in the key sentence. The subject then has a second opportunity to demonstrate whether or not he can utilize the phonetic difference to distinguish words.

2.5.4. Self-report tests. A self-report test presents subjects with a recorded set of phonetic variants, and asks them to select the one that they themselves use most often (Labov 1966:456-474, Trudgill 1972). It is found that subjects regularly shift in the direction of the prestige norm, though a reverse shift was found by Trudgill among men in Norwich (1972b). In Philadelphia, we have utilized self-report tests in continued interviews for the major sound changes in progress.

2.5.5. Subjective reaction tests. The original subjective reaction

or subjective evaluation tests (Labov 1966:405-454) were a linguistic adaptation of Lambert's "matched guise" tests (Lambert et al. 1960). A subject makes judgements of the personalities or social attributes of a recorded series of speakers. Among these speakers, the same person recurs using different linguistic forms. Whereas Lambert's methods use linguistically unanalyzed forms of the dialects or languages that are judged impressionistically by experts to be characteristic, the linguistic approach concentrates the variables of interest in individual sentences and contrasts reactions to these with reactions to neutral sentences or with different values of the same variable, as used by the same speaker.

Subjective evaluation tests were utilized in the South Harlem study in a way that elicited covert as well as overt value systems (Labov, Cohen, Robins & Lewis 1968:II, 217-288; Labov 1972:250) and the general principles behind the linguistic adaptation are given in Labov 1972: 247-251. In our Philadelphia study, a subjective evaluation tests has been developed by S. Herman, with a balanced design using four speakers and five linguistic variables.

2.5.6. Family background tests. Many linguistic investigators have examined the ability of subjects to identify speakers' class or ethnic background on the basis of their speech, e.g., Shuy, Baratz & Wolfram 1969. Such tests are not controlled for either linguistic features or voice qualifier, but they do reveal something of the subjects' sensitivity to markers of ethnic identity, and stimulate research to determine what those features are. The South Harlem study used marginal speakers to determine how judges could be systematically wrong, though some degree of special sensitivity on the part of black subjects emerged (Labov et al. 1968:II, 266-283). Underwood (1975) used a series of ten adjective pairs to register reactions by Arkansas subjects to ten different dialects, unanalyzed, but added a request for racial identification; this showed that Arkansawyers regularly transferred their negative reaction to white South Carolineans who they judged to be black.

In Philadelphia, we have begun work with a family background test that is specialized to narrative style, in order to see if there are subjective correlates to the larger discourse features that seem to be characteristic of the Italian, Irish or Jewish subgroups.

2.5.7. Linguistic insecurity tests. The New York City study used eighteen alternative pronunciations to measure linguistic insecurity (Labov 1966:474-481). Subjects are asked to circle one of two numbers corresponding to the pronunciation that they think is correct and afterwards, to do the same to indicate their own pronunciation. The items used were lexical alternants that had become stereotypes of correctness or pretension in New York City such as [ant] vs. [æənt] for aunt, or [ve^{1}z] vs. [va:z] for vase. Here the measure of insecurity was the number of items where the two judgments were different. Underwood (1975) used a similar test for analyzing insecurity among Arkansas subjects, using phonological alternations such as [dɔg] vs. [dɔ^{ə}g] for dog as a token of the long open o class. These were then compared to the phonetic realizations of this phoneme in spontaneous speech.

In Philadelphia, we have adapted the New York City model in our continued interviews, and added a series of grammatical features.

2.5.8. Frequency tests. Our research on the social significance of linguistic variation has been primarily confined to the examination of the social distribution of variants in production. The question of subjective correlates of these stable quantitative patterns remains an open question. The subjective reaction tests for (r) in New York City showed a strong differential reaction to variable (r) as against categorical [r] pronunciation (Labov 1966:430-436), but the fine-grained pattern of stylistic and social differentiation within the variable class was not tested for subjective reactions. In Philadelphia, we have begun to develop field tests for examining subjective reactions to differing distributions of the variable. There is indirect evidence that quantitative perceptions are transformed into qualitative subjects, often categorical. In Philadelphia, a test developed by S. Herman examines differential responses to the realization of (ing). Subjects are asked to judge a speaker's success in improving his speech, and hear a story read in which every sentence has one progresssive suffix. There are three forms of the stimulus tapes: in A the first five are [ɪŋ], the second five [ɪn]; in B, the order of the blocks is reversed; and in C, the two forms alternate. If speakers are continuously sensitive to frequencies,

then reactions to A, B and C may be quite similar, but if monitoring of frequencies is terminated by categorical judgments, A and B should produce very different types of reactions.

3. The telephone survey.

3.1. The sampling problem. The sociolinguistic study of New York City was a survey of individuals on the Lower East Side, enumerated and selected in the course of a prior survey carried out by sociologists. Studies of Detroit, Norwich, Panama City, and Montreal were also surveys of individuals, randomly selected from a population with various adjustments to obtain social stratification and deal with refusals or absences. The strength of these surveys is their representative character: by following the principles of survey methodology, we can be sure that our results hold true within some degree of error for some well defined population. The South Harlem study also included a random survey of adults. But the primary data were obtained from the studies of adolescent groups in the 112th-118th Street area. Given the nature of adolescent organization, we can state that within a certain area, we studied all the named groups, and various efforts were made to estimate the relation of these groups to the total population, including a complete enumeration of one apartment building (Labov, Cohen, Robins & Lewis 1968:31-40).

The weakness of these studies lies in their approximation of the language obtained to the vernacular, and in the problem of explanation. After an individual is placed in a certain position in the pattern of stylistic and social stratification we must resort to speculation and indirect evidence to find the factors responsible for his achieving that position. In the course of the interview, he may refer to organizations he is a member of, to family or friends he sees in daily life, to reference groups that might influence his language. But we rarely have recordings of his interaction with those groups, and our speculations on how they might affect his language must remain speculations.

3.2. The Philadelphia sample. In the Philadelphia study, we have concentrated our major efforts on six neighborhood studies. These include two working-class neighborhoods that are predominantly Italian and Irish; a lower-class Puerto Rican neighborhood; a lower-middle-class neighborhood that is predominantly Catholic with a fair variety of ethnic representation. In addition, we have access to data from a number of other neighborhood studies that include working-class and middle-class neighborhoods, black and white, carried out by students and others associated with our research project. These neighborhood studies give us a view of characteristic Philadelphia patterns in a wide range of geographic areas, with a fairly wide spread of social class membership within and across neighborhoods. But the neighborhoods were not chosen as part of a systematic enumeration and random selection, and we cannot say for certain which part or how much of Philadelphia they represent. By emphasizing deeper studies of groups and social networks, we gain in the possibilities of explaining linguistic behavior, but lose the representative character of the earlier studies.

To make up for this limitation, we planned to supplement these scattered deep studies with a shallow but broad study, which would have sources of error complementary with those of the neighborhood studies. To obtain the full benefit of a convergence of two methods, the second survey should exploit the dimensions of breadth and representativeness in a single style, without attempting to obtain samples of the vernacular or social interaction, or the benefits of the long and penetrating interviews carried out in the neighborhoods.

3.3. Design of the Telephone Survey. To meet these requirements, the Telephone Survey was designed and carried out by D. Hindle. Subjects were selected through a random choice of listed telephone numbers. They were asked to participate in a short interview dealing with communication in Philadelphia, with emphasis on telephone communication, and special words and sounds of the Philadelphia dialect that might be the sources of misunderstanding. The interviews last no more than 15 minutes. They include enough spontaneous conversation to allow us to chart the speaker's vowel system instrumentally. Word lists and minimal pairs

were included. In addition, the Telephone Survey included questions on the interpretation and acceptability of syntactic features of the Philadelphia dialect: positive anymore, the be auxiliary with done and finished.

After the subjects indicated that they would participate in the interview, they were asked for permission to record. If permission was denied (2%), a short form was conducted without recording. The signal was recorded from a point prior to the telephone loudspeaker, on a Sony TC-120 cassette recorder.

The question naturally arose as to whether telephone signals are good enough to permit instrumental measurements of vowels. The telephone band is sharply limited to a range of 80-3000 Hz. But a test of the same signal recorded directly with a Nagra-IV and a Sennheiser dynamic microphone, and recorded after telephone transmission, indicated that for all but the high vowels, the errors in telephone measurement were within an acceptable range.

From a total selection of 238 listed numbers, 196 subjects were contacted by telephone. There were 87 refusals, and 109 interviews were completed. Of these, 60 were analyzed instrumentally for comparison with the white neighborhood samples, and 3 who appeared to be members of the Black community were studied separately.

3.4. Evaluation of the Telephone Survey. The telephone survey is therefore a representative sample, within limits, of Philadelphians who list their telephones. The sample covers a wide range of the city geographically, and a wider range of socio-economic classes than the neighborhood studies. There are two major problems in determining the representativeness of the sample. The population who cannot afford telephones is not represented at all, and we must consider that the telephone survey is sharply truncated at the lower end. We are informed by the Bell Telephone Survey Company that only two-thirds of the subscribers in Philadelphia list their telephones, and one-third pay to have their telephones unlisted.

One way to compensate for unlisted telephones is to undertake a survey with a random selection of numbers, without drawing on telephone

listings. A second way is to compare the linguistic behavior of people in our neighborhood studies who list their telephones with those who do not. Our current method is the second. Indications to this point confirm the report of the New York City Telephone Company (New York Times, September 14, 1977:35), there is no correlation between listing of telephones and socio-economic class. We find that about the same proportion of our subjects in each neighborhood pay to have their telephones unlisted as those reported for the city as a whole. Further comparison of the two populations will make the effect of this limitation to listed telephones more precise.

The Telephone Survey is thus designed to supplement the strengths of the neighborhood study with the advantages of random selection, and compensate for the limitations of the neighborhood studies in this respect. At the same time, the limitations of the telephone interviews, in their formal character, limited length and low sound quality are compensated for by the very high quality of the neighborhood data in this respect.

4. Group sessions.

Some progress can be made in shifting towards the vernacular in individual interviews. But the best records of vernacular speech have been obtained in group sessions, where the effects of observation are minimized through the controlling interaction of peers. Gumperz' work in Hemnes (1964) was the first to record such group interaction systematically. The South Harlem used group sessions among adolescents as the primary means of obtaining records of the Black English Vernacular. The techniques for setting up and conducting such sessions are given in detail in Labov, Cohen, Robins & Lewis (1966:I, 57-64), with examples of the types of interaction transcribed. In these sessions, each speaker was recorded on a separate track through a lavalier microphone, with as many as ten persons present; a variety of tape recorders was used and the transcriptions coordinated. Speech was recorded during card games, eating and drinking, and spontaneous conversation that included narratives, ritual insults, and confrontations.

To date, the South Harlem groups are the only ones that have been studied quantitatively, but other work is in progress. J. Baugh is currently analyzing data from the black community of Pacoima, California, where he used group sessions as well as individual interviews. The comparison of these materials with Baugh's variable rule re-analysis of the South Harlem data (1977) will greatly extend our knowledge of the vernacular, since the Pacoima subjects are young adults. M. Goodwin has recorded groups of black youth in Philadelphia, using a single tape recorder, as part of her long-term participant-observation. Both Goodwin's and Baugh's materials are limited in the quality of recording, but show great success in minimizing the effects of observation.

In our Philadelphia study, A. Payne conducted an extended series of group sessions among the youth of King of Prussia and surrounding communities. Here a quadriphonic fourtrack tape recorder was used (Sony TC 388-4) with four lavaliere dynamic microphones (Sennheiser MD-214). Transcriptions from six of these sessions were made by G. Jefferson. Since it is possible on this equipment to isolate one or more tracks, or hear them all together, the tracking and coordination of spontaneous conversation are much more feasible, and the total amount of accurate transcription, in Jefferson's estimation, is much higher than with recordings of groups from a single microphone.

In the course of participant-observation in South Philadelphia, A. Bower has recorded a number of groups at the homes of her informants. These recordings form a reliable record of the vernacular in this area. No such records of adult group interaction are available from the earlier sociolinguistic studies such as New York City, Detroit, Panama City, or Norwich. In Philadelphia, we will be able to calibrate the nature of style shifting within the interview with speech used in such group gatherings, and so derive quantitative measures of distance from the vernacular.

In Montreal, the research group headed by G. Sankoff collected recordings of people in a variety of social contexts. Anthropology students were recruited who could persuade someone to allow them to accompany them throughout the course of a day, carrying a cassette tape recorder. This model was developed further by A. Payne in our Philadelphia study. She accompanied Carol Myers, one of her main informants, throughout

her working day and at home, using a Nagra-IV tape recorder and a Sennheiser 404 condenser microphone. Recordings made in the travel agency where the informant worked have remarkable clarity and variety of social interaction which have made them a valuable base for analysis of conversation, and for deeper analysis of phonetic variation. A second series of tape recordings was made at a bridge game, with each player using a separate lavalier microphone.

D. Hindle is currently engaged in a detailed analysis of the Alice B. materials, using instrumental measurements of vowel position to relate linguistic performance to social interaction. Through this study, we hope to obtain further insight into the mechanism of linguistic change by determining the circumstances under which the most advanced tokens of a sound change in progress are realized.

In the light of the many advantages of group sessions, it is easy to disregard some of their limitations. First of all, there is no known way of sampling the groups of a society, and no way of determining what proportion of the total number of intersecting collections of people have been recorded. If we could enumerate all the groups in a neighborhood, it would still not be possible to record more than a few in group sessions, and the opportunity to study those would be the result of many accidental factors. It is possible to obtain very good sound quality in group sessions, though the equipment most often used does not give this result. But even with the best equipment, we find that some individuals do not talk very much in a group. In our South Harlem studies, the most extreme example was Jesse H., who never spoke a single word in two group sessions. Yet Jesse was well known to be a person of consequence, who others turned to for advice, and in individual interviews he talked freely and at great length.

5. Rapid and anonymous surveys

The various methods set out in the preceding sections converge upon the general object of characterizing the speech community in ways that are relatively independent of the social position of the observer. The method of rapid and anonymous surveys (hereafter R&A) provides another

source of data that is even more distinct in its perspective and in the strengths and weaknesses of the data provided.

The initial example of R&A studies in the sociolinguistic literature was carried out in New York City department stores, and is described in detail in Labov 1972, Chapter 2. Employees of three large department stores were asked for directions for an item that was in fact located on the fourth floor. The phonetic realization of (r) in fourth floor was thus recorded twice in handwritten notes.

The department store survey provided sources of error that were complementary with the survey of the Lower East Side. The East Side interviews recorded a great deal of data of high quality, supported by full demographic information; yet they were limited in geographic range within the city, and had only partial success in overcoming the effects of observation. The department store data was quite limited in volume and quality, and there was very little information on the background of the speakers; but it included a much larger geographic base, and the effects of observation were minimal. Furthermore, a great deal of data could be accumulated in a very short time.

Several similar studies were carried out by students of sociolinguistic stratification in other areas (Allen 1968), and the method has proved quite effective in giving a rapid profile of a single variable in a new area. R&A studies may be seen as specimens of the more general class of "unobtrusive observations" (Webb et al. 1966).

In our current studies of Philadelphia, we have used R&A methodology to trace the path of a particular sound change in progress which is most easily traced by impressionistic means. (str) represents the variation between a hissing and a hushing sibilant before /tr/, though it also extends to /st/ clusters without a following /r/ and across word boundaries. We obtained data on (str) in a wide varity of Philadelphia neighborhoods by asking for directions in the neighborhood of a given street which had a name of a form X Street. However, we asked

"Can you tell me how to get to X Avenue?"

In the great majority of cases, the informants would respond "S Street?"

with considerable emphasis on street. This technique for obtaining extra emphasis on the variable without formal elicitation was also used effectively in an R&A inquiry in Paris, with B. Simblist, where we inquired for "la rue Taba" in the vicinity of rue Tabac, in order to obtain data on the palatalization of final /k/.

The sampling techniques of R&A methods can be quite precise, and represent a well-defined population: i.e., all those people found in a public place during a certain time. Salespeople in department stores are a fixed quantity, and easy to represent. But R&A studies carried out in residential areas are samplings of the population found on the street, and the relation of this population to the total residential population is not known.

6. A comparison of methods for acquiring sociolinguistic data

Table 1 shows the various ways in which the various methods outlined above complement each other. Seven methods of gathering data are listed: sociolinguistic surveys of individuals, interviews in the neighborhood studies as first interviews; and as continued interviews; group sessions; participant observation; telephone interviews; and rapid and anonymous surveys. Each of these are rated on seven different criteria: the possibility of obtaining a representative sample; the demographic data obtained; the comparability of the data obtained; success in minimizing the effects of observation; the quality of the sound recorded; the volume of data obtained; and the feasibility of including field experiments.

The ratings are in accordance with the discussions in the preceding pages. It can readily be seen that no one method is excellent in all respects, and some are very sharply limited. But the joint use of several such methods allows us to converge upon our ultimate object: to obtain reliable and valid records of the language used in the speech community.

7. Policy towards the protection of data and subjects' rights

This report on methods would not be complete if it did not deal with several questions of social policy that must confront anyone

who collects recorded data from the speech community. One is the issue of candid recording; a second is the protection of the anonymity of the subjects and preservation of the confidentiality of the data gathered. This inevitably involves the problem of access to the records by other researchers.

7.1. Candid recording. In general, we have set a simple and clear policy to forbid candid recording: at all times, the speaker who is recorded must know that he is being recorded. This principle follows equally from practical and ethical considerations. It is our opinion that researchers who engage in candid recording will eventually result in repressive legislation. The policy we have maintained for some time is consistent with the procedures advocated by the Committee on Human Subjects at this university.

From a practical viewpoint, such candid recordings have little value for linguistic research, since the quality of the data gathered is so poor that the interpretation of the words uttered is often arbitrary. To obtain good sound recording, it is necessary to pay close attention to signal level and monitor equipment at many points in the process. Even when recording is done on an informed and principled basis, many field workers fail to achieve high quality recordings through their reluctance to pay attention to their equipment. A hidden tape recorder and a hidden microphone produce data that is as doubtful as the method itself.

Some researchers have taken advantage of the presence of built-in microphones to deceive subjects in what seems to them an innocuous way. They use a lavaliere microphone during the interview proper, and then disconnect that microphone, leaving the built-in microphone operating. We have never employed this device in LCV. Recordings of this type have little value for us; but even if the recordings from the built-in microphone had satisfactory quality from a distance of a meter or two, it seems to us that the effects of such mild deceit will be damaging in the long run. The subject is usually told afterwards that he was recorded and asked for permission to use the material. It should be borne in mind that when he grants permission, it is a matter of record that such indirect means were used. Long-term contacts with a neighborhood can

only suffer from such techniques.

There remain many situations where it may happen that speakers are recorded without their knowledge. In the course of a recorded interview, new parties may arrive on the scene without being invited. It is not necessarily the responsibility of the interviewer to interrupt whoever is speaking in order to enter into new negotiations. It is our practice to make such a re-introduction whenever a natural pause or break in the conversation makes it practical, if others do not do so first.

Finally, there is an issue concerning recording in public places. No one will object to recording a band in a parade, or a street corner orator. Our South Harlem records include a recording of a confrontation between John Lewis and a pitchman who objected to Lewis's recording him. Lewis stoutly maintained that if the man was honest he would have had no objection to being recorded, and refused to back down. The general principle is to avoid any act that would be embarrassing to explain if it became a public issue, and here Lewis felt no embarrassment.

There is no consensus on the rules for recording in public places. Some members of LCV believe that if a party is talking loud enough in a resturant for any stranger to hear, it is quite legitimate to record them; others disagree. Though it is not likely that such data will be important for quantitative analysis of linguistic change and variation, there are times when it may be valuable qualitative evidence on the use of syntactic or discourse structures. It is possible that such data can be recorded more efficiently in Gregg shorthand, and some members of the staff are currently making efforts to develop the use of this phonetic alphabet.

7.2. Protection of anonymity. All subjects recorded by LCV are assured that no one will listen to the tape recordings except members of the research group. Though this is not an important consideration for every subject we deal with, it is a standard policy maintained over more than a decade. When excerpts or charts are published, it is always with pseudonyms and pseudostreets, and considerable care is taken to be sure that no quotation permits the identification of the person.

7.3. Access to tape recordings. At present, the archives of LCV amount to approximately 4,000 hours of tape recording, covering a number of research projects over a span of 15 years. Access to these materials is limited to members of the research group, in accordance with our statements to subjects. The strict commitment to this policy makes it impossible for LCV to adopt the practice of the University of Montreal group, who made their tape recordings available to any scholar interested in Canadian French. In any case, we do not believe that it is possible for someone to do an effective analysis of recorded speech without any familiarity with the speech community it comes from. When a new person joins our research group, and makes a significant contribution to the materials by contributing from his or her own field work, then access to the general body of tape recordings is given on the same basis as to other members of the staff.

With these limitations to a generalized access, it should be stated that any tape recordings that form the basis of our conclusions are available to corroborate those conclusions, in the same way that any library sources are. Visitors from other research groups, conducting parallel studies, are frequently given the opportunity to listen to a wide variety of materials from our tape recordings, with the general understanding that we are engaged in the joint study of linguistic change and variation. Reliability tests or new instrumental analyses can be made from any of these tape recordings by scholars who have reason to believe that it would be important to do so, as long as they subscribe to the same general policies outlined in this section. Towards this end, we will continue to publish our analyses of data with each individual citation identified by tape number, sex and the speech community that is represented.

Footnotes

[1]The Project on Linguistic Change and Variation has been supported by the National Science Foundation. The field methods discussed here were developed under NSF Grants SOC75-00245 and BNS76-80910.

[2]This terminology and the principle are the work of Ivan Sag and Group 3 of the Linguistics 560 class, "Study of the Speech Community," from 1972-3.

[3]This impression is confirmed by the concrete experience of two graduate students who spent a summer interviewing in two areas of Philadelphia to obtain data on the use of tense markers in narrative. They presented themselves as school teachers who wanted to know more about the community. Though they met with the usual warm reception in working class areas, they obtained very few personal narratives and very little relevant data as a consequence.

[4]The original text was written by W. Labov, but the final version transcribed here represents the finished performance of the speaker D. Depue, whose contributions are largely responsible for the intense interest and involvement created by this narrative.

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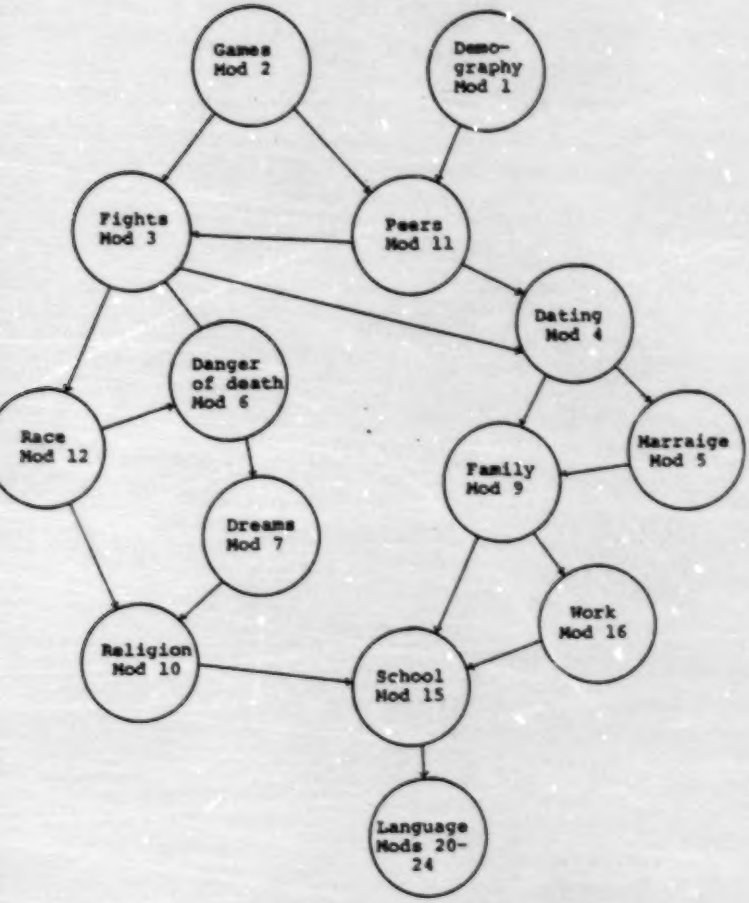
FIGURE 1

Characteristic network of modules
for adolescent or young adult speaker



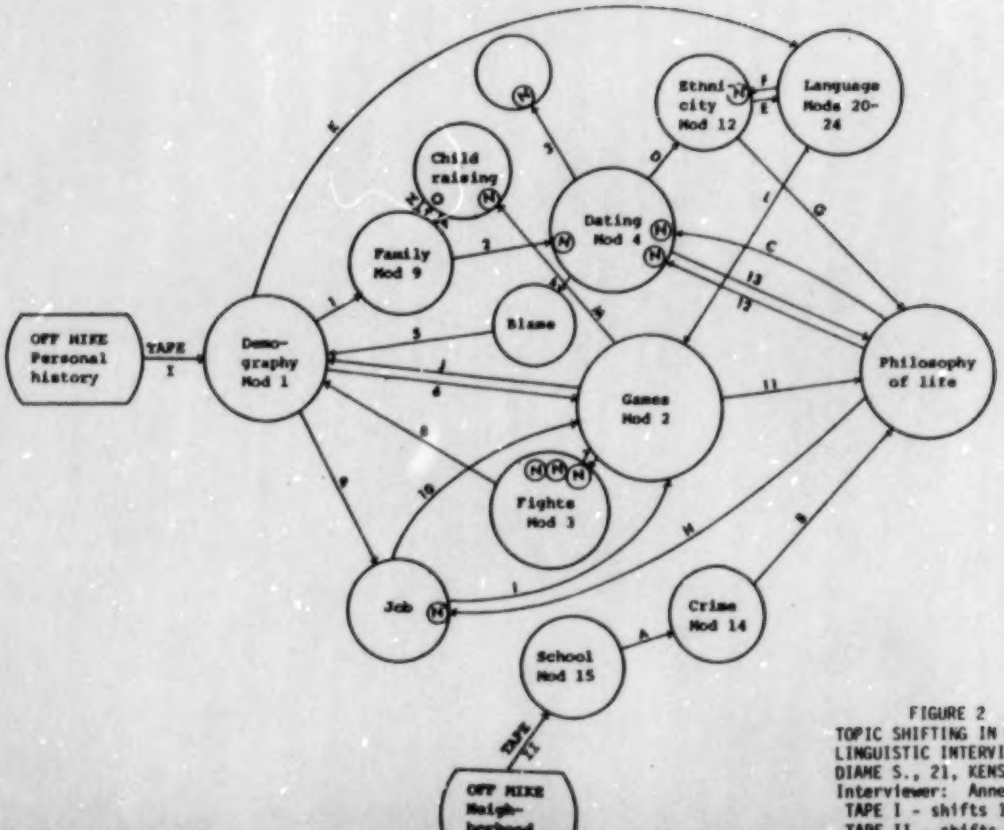


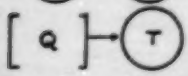
FIGURE 2
TOPIC SHIFTING IN A SOCIO-LINGUISTIC INTERVIEW WITH DIANE S., 21, KENSINGTON
Interviewer: Anne Bower
TAPE I - shifts 1-13

FIGURE 3
Detailed topic shifting in the interview
with Diane S., 21, Kensington, Philadelphia

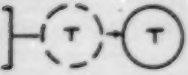
uninterrupted talk by the subject

majority of the talk by the subject,
with questions and responses from interviewer

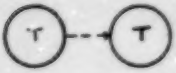
topic initiated by speaker



direct response to interviewer question



question elicits response and question
pattern between interviewer and subject;
subject goes on to initiate a related topic



passive guidance of interviewer, allowing
subject to shift tangentially

FIGURE 4

Detailed topic shifting for first section of interview with Diane S.

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